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ABSTRACT

Originally established with the aid of federal grants, the continuing state dissemination program--designed to place the results of educational research and other educational resources at the disposal of Montana educator users--is described from its inception in 1976 through 1980. The dissemination capacity of the state educational system is reviewed as it existed prior to the program; as the information was gathered in the first year to establish a continuing program; and in terms of the accomplishment of resource development, linkage, and leadership objectives in each succeeding year. The report concludes with a brief glimpse of the future of the program, now to be wholly state supported. There is a table summarizing major accomplishments. (RAA)

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FINAL REPORT

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Dissemination Capacity Building Project
Office of Public Instruction
State Capitol
Helena, Montana 9620

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FINAL REPORT

DISSEMINATION CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

I. DISSEMINATION CAPACITY PRIOR TO 1976

Prior to 1976 and the beginning of the Dissemination Capacity Building Grant, the following conditions existed.

A. Lack of any centralized resource services or control. Resource materials were ordered by individual programs and their existence was unknown to other Office of Public Instruction (OPI) programs. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction is the Montana State Education Agency (SEA) and administers the various functions of the OPI staff.

B. Lack of linkage with local education agencies (LEAs). The many individual programs within OPI sent out separate and independent newsletters with resulting lack of coordination and duplication. Requests for information services lacked a central focus.

C. No state funding for resource control and dissemination. All dissemination activity was accomplished with federal funds--primarily Title IV.

D. No Resource Base. A central OPI clearing house for resource materials and information was nonexistant.

E. No online search capability. The OPI was conducting a few database searches by mail. The long delays discouraged use.

F. No training of SEA or LEA staff. There was no training of either OPI of LEA staff. The logistics of training and linkage had not been established.

G. Inability of schools to locate and translate current research into practice. Schools had no central source of current research and information on the application of research to local problems.

The purpose of the Dissemination Capacity Building Program was to solve some of the problems that existed in Montana prior to 1976. The following sections describe the year-by-year goals and accomplishments of the State Capacity Building Program in Montana.

II. FIRST GRANT YEAR--FY 1976

A. The first objective for FY 1976 was to "identify information resource needs and develop plans for improving the resource base. A preliminary survey of Staff Library utilization was conducted, a statewide user needs survey was initiated, cooperation in the NIE/SDC national user needs survey was extended, and toll-free hotline and search trends were documented.

Priority needs were identified in language arts, mathematics, science, social sciences (particularly Montana history), special education and library-media.

A packet on metric education was prepared for statewide distribution to school administrators. A need for Montana-produced promising practices emerged, and Project Exchange cooperated with the ESEA Title IV staff to experiment with and plan for file development in that area. A need for human resources became evident, and project staff capitalized on the efforts of both the Reading Brokerage functioning through the OPI and

the Missoula Area Resources Center operating in Missoula County. A non-project activity, yet an important dissemination strategy, Montana Schools, the OPI newspaper, was produced during the 1975-76 school year in an expanded, monthly newsmagazine format. The resource base available through the Staff Library was improved by increasing the educational journal collection and basic reference tools. In addition, expanded services became available through a contract with the San Mateo Educational Resources Center (SMERC) in California (to supplement services previously available from the Northern Colorado Educational Board of Cooperative Services (NCEBOCS) and to help absorb the impact of heightened search activity). Ahead of schedule, the title of the Staff Library was changed to the Resource Center, and staffing patterns shifted during Project Exchange's first year. An additional staff position from state sources also was approved for the Resource Cente for FY 1977. During the year, liaison with other state agencies (particularly the Montana State Library and the Records Management Bureau) was accelerated, and the draft work of the Interstate Project on Dissemination was a reference for the operational and developmental growth of the project.

B. The second objective for Fiscal Year 1976 was to "train selected agency and field staff as "information extension agents." Following a review of several training packages and trainers around the nation, a training program was designed and conducted for pilot site personnel. Three days in January were devoted to initial training of 19 Extension

Agents in Missoula County, the pilot site. Dr. Frank Mattas and Ms. Kathy Clay of SMERC and Mr. Rob Fussell of the Oregon SEA were engaged as consultants for that training session. In February, Mr. Fussell, Ms. Cheryl Chase of NCEBOCS and Dr. William Wilmot of the University of Montana were engaged to assist with skill-building clinics for the agents. Six staff members from the OPI, as well as project and library staff, participated in all the training sessions.

C. The third objective for Fiscal Year 1976 was to "develop a goal-based planning model to provide a context both for information services and for the coordinated implementation of the Montana Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and the 1975 Report on Basic Quality Education (BQE)." During the summer of 1975, work toward this objective commenced with three days inservice training for the OPI staff in humanistic education and goal-based planning. Dr. Russell Hill of Research for Better Schools in Philadelphia, Dr. Roy Doyle of Arizona State University and Dr. Charles Blondino of the Washington SEA were engaged as consultants. Formation of a regional (county task force in Missoula County, the pilot site, also occurred. Six OPI staff members acting as a Field Team were assigned to the Task Force in an extension agent mode. Serving on the Task Force were eleven representatives from the school systems in Missoula County. Transition was chosen as the topic to be addressed; by "transition," the Task Force determined that it wanted to ease student adjustment from the eighth to

ninth grades and from rural to urban environments. Curriculum coordination and counseling/placement services were viewed as vehicles for improving transition problems that may occur. A large elementary district, a high school district and fourteen rural districts in the county were involved. As one means of clarifying the variables involved in transition, the Field Team provided search materials to the Task Force.

D. The fourth objective for Fiscal Year 1976 was to "pilot and assess a planning and information-sharing model in a selected region, with particular emphasis on the development of a feedback system."

The cadre of 19 Extension Agents and the 11-member Task Force operating in the pilot site, Missoula County, constituted the model being explored. The Extension Agents gained access to resource bases through the Staff Library; and the Task Force gained access through the six Field Team members, all of whom cooperated with the Project Assistant charged with formative evaluation.

E. Other activities of note during 1976

1. Project funded staffing was completed by October 1.
2. Presentations were made to the Montana Library Commission and selected pilot site personnel.
3. On-site visits were made to South Carolina. New York and Rhode Island SEAs, the Merrimac Education Resources Center in Massachusetts, NCEBOCS and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Social Studies in Boulder, SMERC and the Far West Regional Education Laboratory in San Francisco.
4. The reference retrieval specialist received training at SMERC.

III. SECOND GRANT YEAR--FY 1977

During FY 1977 Project Exchange addressed three goal areas: 1) identify resource and staffing needs and improve the resource base; 2) refine and expand linkage between educational practitioners and educational knowledge and practice; and 3) provide leadership through incentives and management strategies that promote two-way resource/information sharing.

Several changes in leadership occurred in FY 1977. Project Exchange was incorporated into the Program Services Unit of the Department of Administrative Services. This unit combined the major information systems of the OPI into one integrated unit which included Planning, Development and Evaluation; the Resource Center; Data Processing; and the State Assessment Program. The project director, Mr. Wayne Pyron was given full-time responsibility for Project Exchange.

A. Objective 1--Resource Development. The Resource Center was moved to a more suitable location in a building housing most of the OPI curriculum consultants.

The Resource Center executed a standing order, with non-project funds, for the complete ERIC microfiche. This standing order added to a three-year back collection which NIE obtained for the agency. The Resource Center and Project Exchange explored alternatives for fiche-to-fiche reproduction equipment. Extensive resources were channeled into the acquisition of materials related to the BQE Study and the Montana Educational Assessment Program. In addition, the Resource

Center acquired additional basic educational reference works which complemented previous holdings and provided more extensive internal search capability. With the addition of a permanent librarian to the staff that fall, the Resource Center embarked on a new thrust to reorganize its holdings, using a combination of the Dewey Decimal System and ERIC descriptors for indexing and cataloging purposes. A centralized catologing system for all OPI materials, documents and books was begun.

Several institutional relationships were initiated during Project Exchange's second year. A concerted effort was made to establish communications with all of the ERIC Clearinghouses and to keep abreast of all their relevant publications and services. Mr. Pyron visited the Clearinghouse on Educational Management in Eugene, Oregon, in conjunction with other meetings in Portland, and a representative from that Clearinghouse visited for a day in Helena and conducted a workshop on abstracting and indexing for Resource Center and other OPI staff and provided consultative assistance to project and Resource Center personnel. Potential relationships with information venders were identified and explored, and personnel from the Area Cooperative Educational Service agency in New Haven, Connecticut visited Helena to provide consultative assistance. The Resource Center also maintained its contract of several years' standing with ncebocs and the contract with SMERC that was initiated with project support during Project Exchange's first year of operation.

B. Objective 2--Linkage. During the first two years of its life (through September 1977), Project Exchange trained 113 individuals to be "Extension Agents," with responsibilities of processing questions for searches to be done by the Project Exchange staff. FY 1977 (July 1976 through September 1977) witnessed the following training events:

DATE	TARGET AUDIENCE	NO. TRAINEES
September 1976	Missoula County educators	22
November 1976	Special Education Learning Resource Center staff members	25
February 1977	Selected individuals statewide	20
June 1977	Selected individuals statewide	12
August 1977	Follow Through Advisory Council members	15
TOTAL LINKERS TRAINED DURING FY 1977		94
TOTAL LINKERS TRAINED DURING FY 1976		19

During FY 1977, Project Exchange began to focus on strengthening linkage to schools through program consultants in the OPI. During FY 1977, the ESEA Title IV program required schools submitting proposals for innovation grants to complete a thorough literature review, and search service was extended to schools through the Resource Center with Title IV staff acting as "Extension Agents."

C. Objective 3--Leadership. Leadership activities during FY 1977 provided opportunities to reassess project priorities and commitments and to begin to make the necessary readjustments to assure long-range success.

Formative evaluation efforts continued, with the most significant development having been liaison with National Testing Service (NTS). The project director, coordinator, and assistant, as well as other SEA personnel all devoted considerable time to work with NTS personnel, including attendance at two regional workshops conducted by NTS, hosting NTS personnel for two on-site visits, and numerous telephone conferences and data gathering activities. Project staff developed a preliminary paper addressing issues and alternatives concerning cost recovery, and it was anticipated that during FY 1978 the State Superintendent would be able to address the question so that policy could be developed and any necessary recommendations prepared for the 1979 legislature.

Considerable liaison and cooperation took place with units of the Montana University System concerning needed mutual development. Project staff met on several occasions with the deans of education and their colleagues at both the University of Montana in Missoula and Montana State University in Bozeman. These meetings resulted in continued cooperation between Project Exchange and university personnel, especially Extension Agent training. For example, the June 1977 training event was offered on the campus of the University of Montana as a graduate-level course for credit. University faculty members and previously trained Extension Agents provided leadership for putting together the training agenda.

The Montana Library Association invited Project Exchange to present an overview of its activities at its annual convention held in May 1977. That presentation generated considerable interest and follow-up inquiries. Eastern Montana College in Billings, one of the units of the Montana University System, hosted a multi-state meeting on Teacher Centers and requested Project Exchange to discuss its activities at that meeting.

IV. THIRD GRANT YEAR--FISCAL YEAR 1978

A. Objective 1--Resource Development. During fiscal year 1978, Project Exchange made more progress in the area of resource development than in the other two objective areas. Generally, progress could be grouped as follows: 1) database search capability; 2) microfiche reproduction capability; 3) expanded resource center holdings; 4) resource packets; and 5) liaison with Northwest Exchange out of the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory.

During FY 1978, Project Exchange developed within the Resource Center the capability for computerized database searching. The 1978 work plan concerning equipment acquisition was followed, although slightly behind schedule. Project Exchange and the Resource Center purchased computer terminals as planned and installed a "foreign exchange" telephone line to Redwood City, California from which it was possible to call either SMERC or Lockheed (DIALOG) or Systems Development Corporation (SDC).

In addition, a microprocessor with dual disk drives was purchased on a matching basis with available state funds.

A microfiche reproduction machine was purchased using Resource Center funds. The Resource Center continued to expand its holdings throughout the year. Resource Center funds were used to continue the standing order to the ERIC microfiche collection.

B. Objective 2--Linkage. During FY 1978 services continued with some noticeable changes in emphasis. Emphasis this fiscal year was on enhancing the project's relationship with OPI staff consultants and in providing services to Montana educators through these consultants. Acquisition of computer terminals and the capability of in-house on-line searching greatly enhanced the accomplishment of this objective. With this capability readily accessible, OPI staff members used ERIC and its related services much more extensively than they ever had before. This was as we hoped it would be. What was not foreseen was the unexpected demand on the Project Director's time that implementing such service would entail. The net result was that the Project Director spent much more of his time processing ERIC searches than had been envisioned when the 1978 plan was written.

C. Objective 3--Leadership. Office of Public Instruction management addressed the cost recovery question and committed to implementing a cost recovery policy statewide during the 1979-80 school year. Legal questions were researched as was the question of the need

for enabling legislation. An initial cost policy was developed. Evaluation data continued to be collected to document Resource Center and Project Exchange activities.

V. FOURTH GRANT YEAR--FISCAL YEAR 1979

A. Objective 1--Resource Development. During the fiscal year 1979, project activities progressed generally according to plan. Utilization of databases other than ERIC increased considerably throughout the year to include Lockheed and SDC. With virtually unlimited access to ERIC via COSMOS, ERIC utilization increased dramatically both in service to OPI staff and to school districts not previously being served. The most significant accomplishment during fiscal 1979 in the resource area was further development of what was called the "Montana Promising Practices File." ERIC's technical assistance team visited Montana during fiscal year 1979 and their criticism and suggestions were most influential and helpful in giving ideas on final formatting of the file.

B. Objective 2--Linkage. During FY 1979, services were initiated to various larger districts in the state and discussions were initiated with numerous other districts concerning possible implementation of service to them either in fiscal 1980 or in subsequent years. As planned, we contracted with a person to conduct searches for us. This person started in December and soon became quite competent in searching ERIC. Linker training was provided for National Diffusion Network State Facilitators (NDN).

C. Objective 3--Leadership. The cost recovery plan became a reality. The OPI requested the 1979 Montana Legislature to establish a revolving fund allowing school districts to be charged for services rendered. The legislature passed such a law, providing a convenient method to contract with districts. The plan was fully implemented during the fiscal year 1980. Some districts signed contracts and others gave verbal commitment to subscribe. Most of the Project Director's time was spent in contacting schools to make them aware of the services now available to them.

VI. FIFTH GRANT YEAR--FISCAL YEAR 1980

A. Objective 1--Resource Development. During the fiscal year 1980, another contract with SMERC was negotiated. The utilization of SMERC as well as ERIC was increased considerably during the year.

Two database journals, Online and Database, were subscribed to by Project Exchange. The RIE Title Index was purchased as well as Guide to Dialog-Databases and Guide to Dialog Searching.

Because of budget constraints, no further work was done on the Promising Practices files.

Plans were made to phase out the federal funding and provide for support of project activities through the Resource Center and other existing Program Services Unit operations.

B. Objective 2--Linkage. The name "Project Exchange" was changed to "The MINE" (Montana Instructional Information for Educators). A statewide advertising campaign was launched using materials developed in cooperation with the Northwest Exchange of the Northwest Educational Laboratory in Portland.

An article for the Montana Schools was prepared and published. An information packet was developed for statewide mailing to administrators and librarians. Regional workshops dealing with the services of MINE were conducted in Butte, Missoula, Bozeman, Miles City and Helena. The workshops in Missoula and Bozeman were conducted at the Teacher Centers. The workshop in Helena was designed for all Special Education personnel in the state. MINE contracts were developed with the Teacher Centers as well as the Butte school system. In addition, visitations were made to Three Forks, Willow Creek, Belgrade, Manhattan, Livingston, Big Timber, Laurel and Lockwood. In all, 452 searches were conducted using the Project Exchange facility.

C. Objective 3--Leadership. Leadership activities consisted primarily of increasing the linkage activities above and of preparing for the complete loss of federal funds which were already considerably diminished at this point.

VII. CONTINUATION ACTIVITIES

All components of the dissemination activities that were developed with federal funds remain in place and operational. The subscription policy has been

dropped through lack of interest on the part of the LEAs. However, the service continues to be available to schools or any educator in Montana for a $35.00 per search basis. The service is viewed with favor by those using it.

Other dissemination activities continue to remain consolidated and have become even more so due to fiscal constraints during the past 18 months. A share the mail system has been used very successfully to lower the cost of getting information to schools.

The major concerns that remain are the continued inability to reach the audience of teachers and administrators in the field. Despite all of the workshops, statewide mailings, articles in Montana Schools, etc., we continually find that a large percentage of educators, especially teachers, are not aware of the available services. It is expected that major efforts will be made in the next year to increase the flow of information to teachers and administrators, especially in the smaller school districts throughout Montana.

The attached chart gives a brief overview of the accomplishments of the Montana State Dissemination Capacity Building Project.

TABLE I

Montana Dissemination Prior to 1975	Montana Dissemination After Project Exchange
A. Lack of centralized services	A. Centralized resource center and consolidation of information services.
B. Lack of linkage with LEAs.	B. Over 100 district linkers trained in how to access available information.
C. No sate funding for resources and dissemination.	C. 100% state funding for resource center and staff. Database search activities supported by state approved revolving fund.
D No resource base.	D. Resource center acts as central clearinghouse for resource dissemination and control.
E No online search capability.	E. Complete online search capability backed up by ERIC microfiche collection.
F. No training of SEA or LEA staffs.	F. Highly aware SEA staff. LEA staffs have increased awareness but need more.
G. Inability of schools to locate and translate current research into practice.	G. Resources and organization available to assist schools in putting research to use.